Gazetteer

&

Phenology

J T Waterfield

October 2024

A **Gazetteer** is a geographical dictionary or directory, an important reference for information about places and place names...

– UCLA Library Guide

Phenology is the study of the timing and cyclical patterns of events in the natural world...

– USA National Phenology Network

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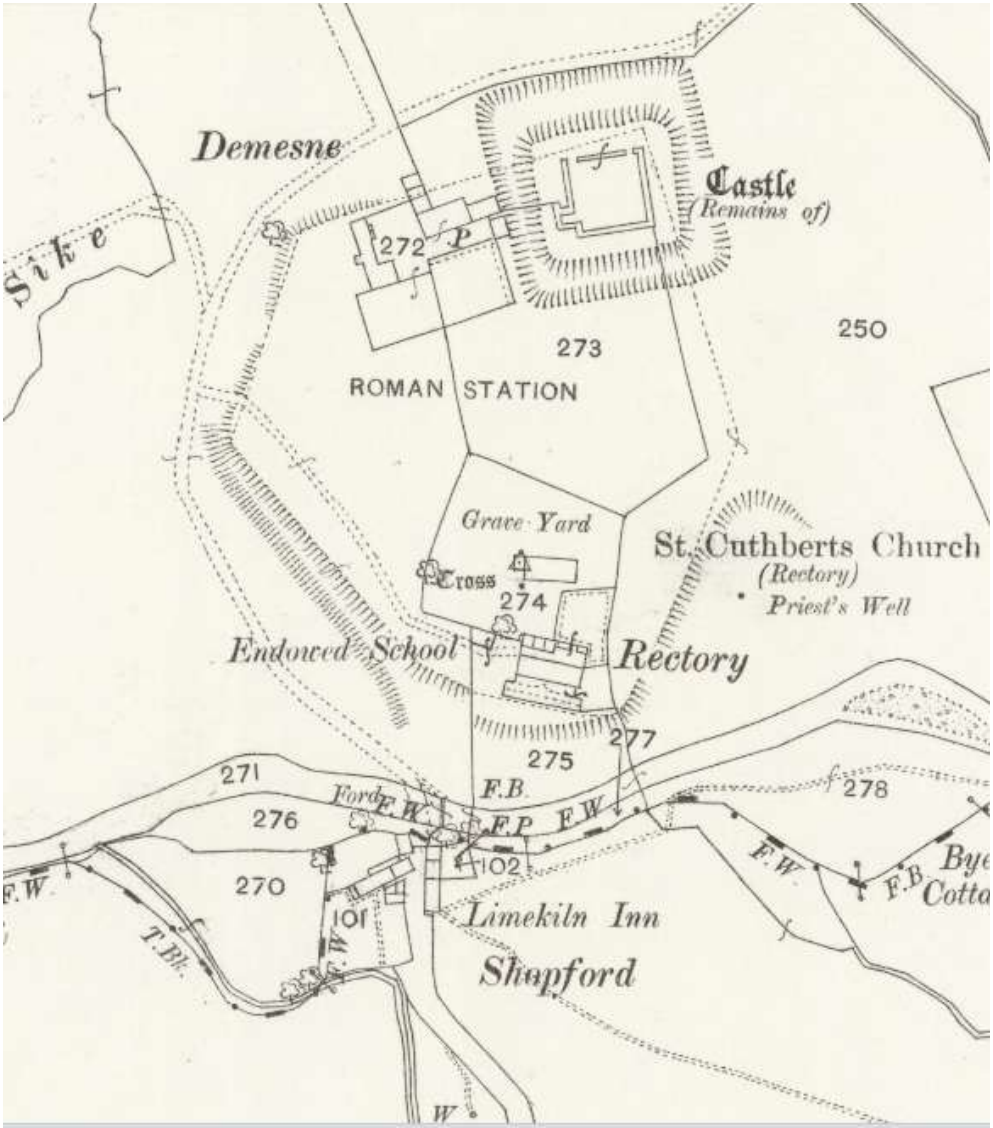
Gazetteer



Aphendrika

Here on the blue margin three old churches
like tumbled barns huddle, amongst scrubby furze
hairy over the foreground's lumps and bumps.
You can feel the long tides of history stretching
out to the flat horizon, a tad implacable
and completely alien in scale, but still a view
to look at from both ends of the telescope,
the average just another brief tourist, paused.
Those busy in this harbour had no thought of me.
No roads now. There is a sense of ending.
This is what we will come to as well, all
our striving narratives to an unexpected stop,
relics we would not have chosen, in a place
we'd ceased caring about, without even noticing.


Demesne
Sike
Castle
(Remains of)
272
P
273
250
ROMAN STATION
Grave Yard
St. Cuthberts Church
(Rectory)
Priest's Well
Cross
274
Endowed School
Rectory
277
275
271
F.B.
Ford
F.W.
F.P
F.W
278
276
102
270
F.W.
F.W.
F.B.
Bye
Cotta
101
Limekiln Inn
T.Bk.
F.W.
Shopford
W

Bewcastle

for daylight flying owls

In the circling banks, a castle, a church, a farm
and the cross: the whole complex rendered
as simple icons, a Ladybird illustration
of Our Island Story, and the punctuating sheep
renewed as untraceably as the fleecy clouds.
You can sense the inevitable in this long dance,
even if the evolutions, for all the little museum's
earnest explanations, are hard to grasp.
Cocidius – good to have at your back in a melee
but the last you'd want to find at the latrine,
vulgar little bugger – dodges behind ghost booths
on the green: if he can live with that fancy gnomon
impaling what you thought was true – if you
call it living – so can you, for an hour or two.



Blacklands (north of Withypool)

Cut and laid beeches tie in older stone,
silvery grey and mossy. Some of these
hedges have run to tree long ago, the walls
overtopped and throttled. One field
follows another, a series of removes
gradually up slope, little hidden gate gaps
leading through the thick bank-breaks,
each a surprise. This is not the high ground
with stone circle and tumuli found to the south,
nor yet the little castled river valleys,
but rather a vaguer occupancy hinting
at continuity. Horses watch. The grass is rich.
The sky is bright blue with white tufts.
A gentle medley, an unexpected Eden.


The
Middle
Stantling Flow
Black Stantling
Greyfell Co

Christianbury Crags

The urban traveller, after an uncomfortable night
in a smoke-filled bothy, struggled up here,
claimed there were wild cats – who could say
otherwise amongst these rocks outcropping
over hours of swallowing bog? Being here,
the wet blanket of a country empty to the horizon
even of field or cattle, indeed of anything
identifiable, is one of those achievements
to put in a motto or diary, decorated with clouds
and a muddy relief. What fool would struggle on
across sucking peat, sluices and soggy sink holes,
seeking Burnt Tom and Sighty Crags? Fancy names
for pathless desolation; at least it's largely
downhill from here – and tea eventually, maybe.



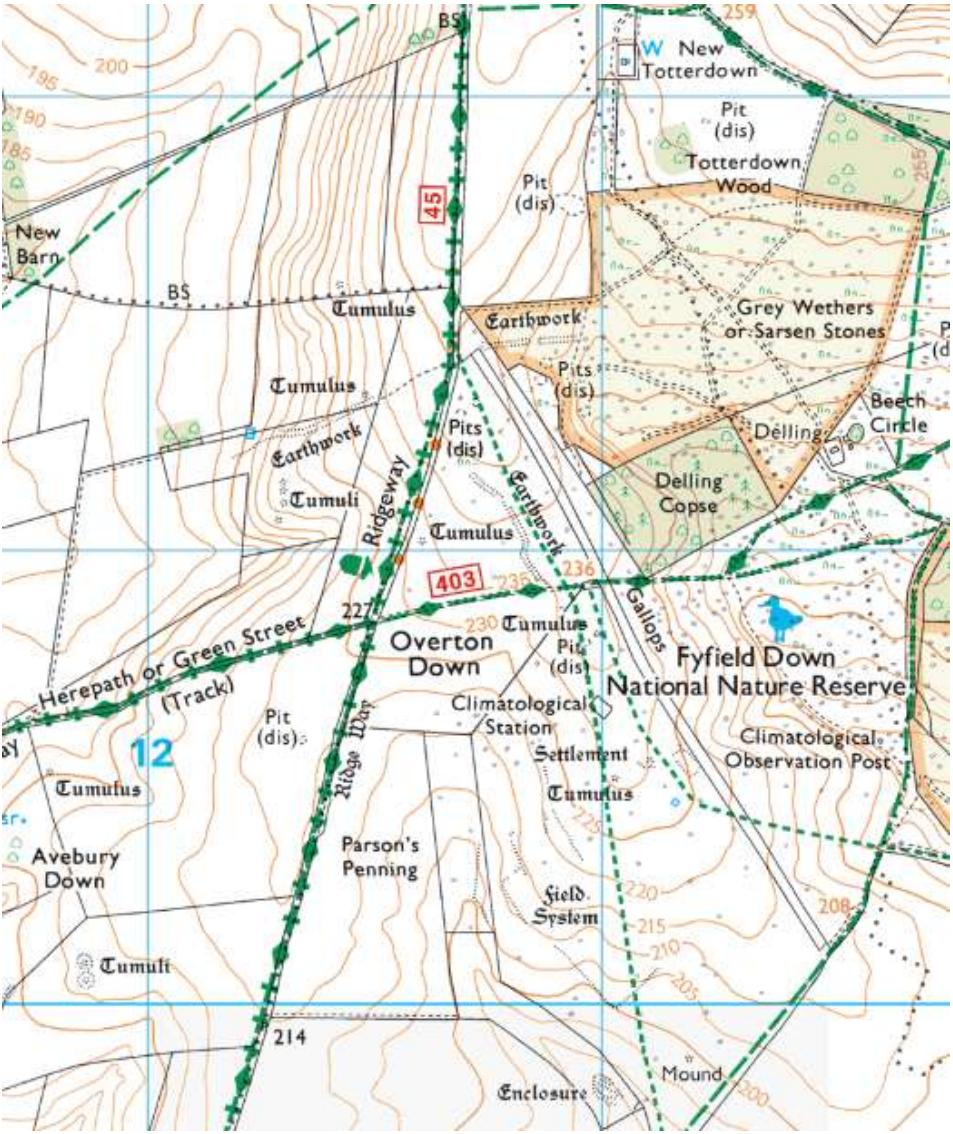
Grantchester meadows

There were seven herons along the river,
once, amazing, and surely an abundance.
The flat turning river is usually emptier –
bicycles tick by regularly along the paved way
up-slope, but down here you need meander-
ing time. Stumpy hirsute willows are hollow
watchers; and little bridges and gates, field
after field, and all the while that dam' clock
stuck at tea-time, and Pink Floyd, tumble
drying in your head – the present bundled up
until later, past the tea-garden, step into
the churchyard to check the wooden cross,
harder to read with every visit, weathering –
the stone neighbours little better, though.



High Onset – getting there

Beyond Roadhead – long beyond Wall – wild country
takes over: the tarmac rots at its edge like empire,
and sudden sharp corners confuse the compass.
A muddled while later and you might find a field gate
tagged by milk churns; concrete to a silage heap;
then a rocky track dipping down
to a little stream under dark trees. After that
there's only faint wheel-marks in the grass
left-hand up a small hillside. Arrival at the top
in a small courtyard, worn white-wash, strong-
framed windows and blue doors waiting,
is a wonder and release – after the stale car
a cloche is removed from the heart, the spirit spills
open, flooding the landscape like late evening sun.


BS
259
W New Totterdown
Pit (dis)
Totterdown Wood
Pit (dis)
45
New Barn
BS
Tumulus
Earthwork
Grey Wethers or Sarsen Stones
Pits (dis)
Tumulus
Beech Circle
Pits (dis)
Earthwork
Delling
Tumuli
Ridgeway
Earthwork
Delling Copse
Tumulus
403
236
227
230
Tumulus
Overton Down
Pit (dis)
Gallops
Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve
Herepath or Green Street (Track)
Climatological Station
Pit (dis)
Ridge Way
Settlement
Climatological Observation Post
12
Tumulus
Tumulus
Avebury Down
Parson's Penning
Field System
208
220
215
210
205
Tumuli
214
Mound
Enclosure
200

Over Overton Down

It's quite a slog east up the Herepath, chalk
claggy in the wet or dusty in summer
and nothing but the odd ditch or fold
for shelter. Perhaps there was more scrub
before the sheep got at shoots amid the whin.
It is easier to imagine the ice sheet grinding
over this upland aeons earlier, for here now flock
its dregs, grazing grey wethers, hull-down.
What we're left, somewhere in between,
is that long track along the ridge, an axe
or sword sharpener, hints of memorials:
enough to wonder what life was about,
even as, open to big sky, way above all,
answers march at the rim of reckoning.



Papay (Knap of Howar)

On this green pancake of an island the sheep
eat seaweed. Well, maybe that was another one.
Along the shore a chaos of building stone
is a tumbled library, whatever information
used to be here is long gone. Except at one point
you stumble on some unexpected meaning
tucked into a green dune: single-celled living
walled-in by shucked shells, others' lives
at once close and unimaginably alien, 5,000
years old but see, box-beds, shelves, hearth, basin:
AirBNB could offer nothing more essential.
Did they pray to God? There's no sign;
nor of love, nor joy, nothing but the basics.
Maybe even closer than at first glance, then.



Christmas 1960
at St Albans.

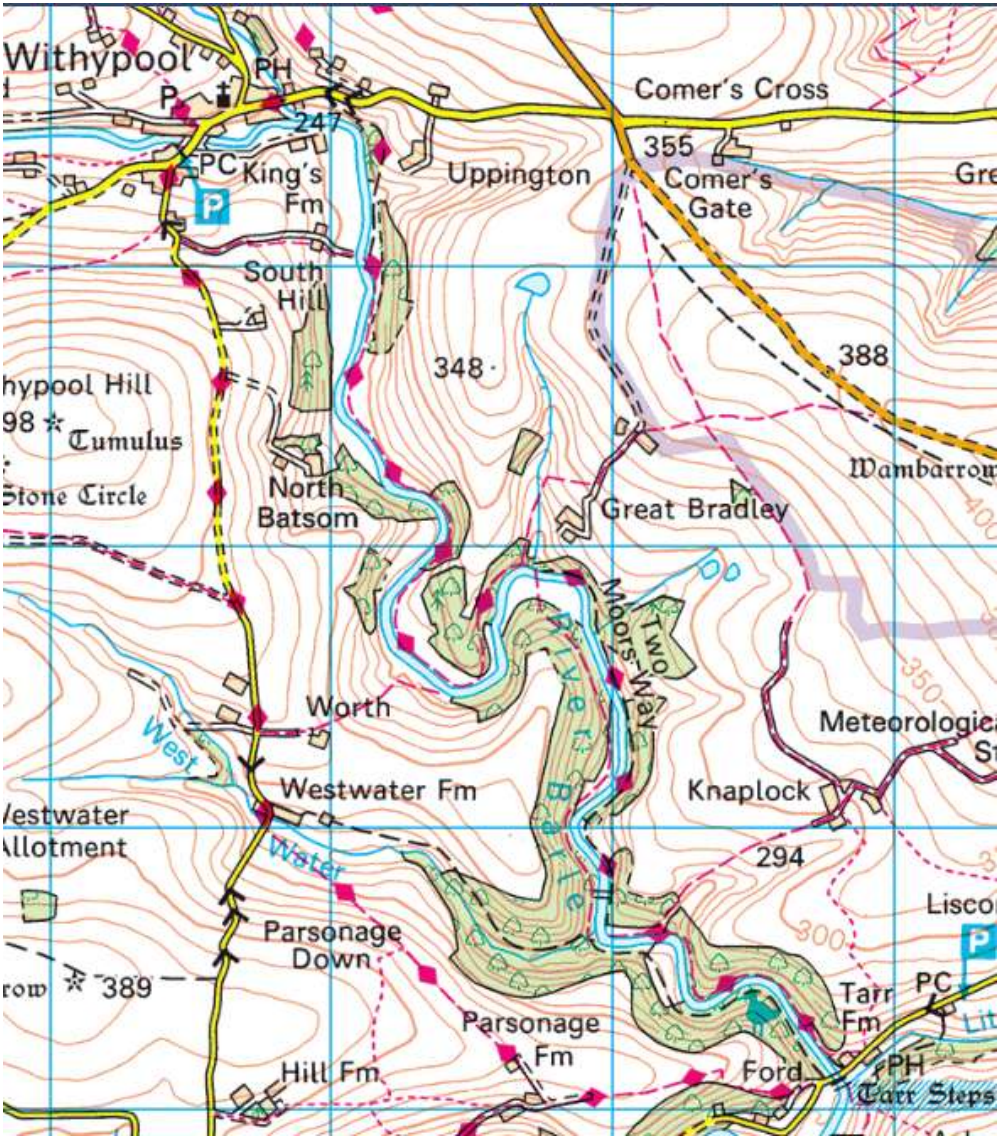
St Albans, London Road

The boggy bit across the stream was Berkshire,
before I knew what a county was. I had apples
outside my window, and heavy snow falling
and falling beyond the living room curtains,
when I was allowed in there at Christmas, 1963.
The world was indeed a disconnected place,
huge chunks of experience turning and melting
slowly. What else? The A30 traffic was a swish,
swish, of motor-sheep to be counted; the top floor
was special territory; there was a step down
to the kitchen, with its always-used back-door;
milk in a comforting blue-and-white-ringed jug.
Across the dangerous road, beyond the golf-course
with its angry players, the wild Heath awaited.


Hookin
St Tredwall's Chapel
(In Ruins)
Brough
Human Remains & Ancient
Coins found A.D 1879
LOCH
OF
ST TREDWALL
Sur: of Water 8.6. January 1876
Cuppin
B.M.10.4
B.M.10.0
to Floods
16
14
15
15

St Tredwell's Loch

Devoutly pacing around this loch – as far as possible,
given the lumps and bumps, brambles and scrambles –
opens the soul to emptiness. B-i-i-i-g sky, please...
Of course you have to believe, and as for 'working' –
well, God's will, afterwards. The lens below
and the lens above are both blank; hard to see
how the ant-like figures inching silently around
might trigger some machinery of miracle,
but the wise pastor allows any form of prayer,
and has himself witnessed blindness cured.
Never mind the crannog and broch, both
long crumbled: so others have tried living
here before: the stones of the latter, at least,
donated to the chapel – founded it, you might say.


Withypool
PH
P
247
PC
King's
Fm
Uppington
Comer's Cross
355
Comer's
Gate
South
Hill
348
388
Tumulus
Stone Circle
North
Batsom
Great Bradley
Wambarrow
Two
Moors
Way
River Barle
Worth
West
Water
Westwater Fm
Knaplock
294
Parsonage
Down
389
Parsonage
Fm
Hill Fm
Tarr
Fm
PC
Ford
PH
Tarr Steps

Going down to Tarr Steps

Upstream from Withypool is increasingly open,
treeless, exposed – Cow Castle is perched
on no more than a hillock, hand-to-mouth retreat,
and the stream, curling around, looks blankly
innocent. But head south and the story darkens,
though at first a series of charming scenes
opens out. Tree-clad mysteries, plunging curves,
on either side, are only backdrop, while the waters,
still slow around the margins of the broad meadows,
unacknowledged, gradually gather and swell.
Going on, the hillsides narrow and tighten,
and the river, undeniably loud below, is insistent,
as the path scrambles sketchily over bare rock.
Megalithic bridge reached at last, relief with a sigh.



Thrang

Over a beck, and
only a path to the door:
all grass, a good start.
Further afield, Fickle Stones offer crossing
over hand-sized pavé under living glass, while
above and above, whipped grass and rocks
whistle through the muscular wind.
Tomorrow bullies in below the crags –
this far up-valley we crouch under the roof,
powerless. Later, after the rain, the ways
are silvery streams, tinkling and winking.
Holidays ebb, end,
iron roads insist; return
is a seeded heart.

Phenology



Note the one way...

Note the one-way optimism of the magnolia –
but look here, it's phenology, ain't it, wielding
a long view like a big stick we can see further,
then talk softly and hide (nice!) our despair
in the details. Even the tallest roller-coaster
runs down eventually – yeah, no surprise –
and arguments about a comma here, or there
start to seem pretty petty – pin meanings
after the killing-jar, dead right, dumb-ass;
and the formless lake of language is reduced
to a smiley (ie no idea). Rowing out over
the senseless reflection (screaming? ice cream?)
is a moon-shot, shivering – do you hear me, echo?
And the bruised tepals darken underfoot, over.



Luna in the morning

Volcanos open beneath our feet, skipping
to school, a vermilion leaf or a sudden
magpie; explanations are like duplo blocks,
life made easy, solvable problems. So, skating
over thin ice, faster and faster, it's Friday
again, and the week's shaky reckoning
has been dragged back out to sea, leaving
the sand smooth as any clean slate. Turns out
that castles are ambitious, and huge Jupiter
is proximate, last thus in the winter of '63
back there with my first memory, snow falling,
huge heavy flakes beyond the cold grown-up
windows; you see, it's never too late to learn –
brief joy, goodbye – have a good day, little one.



Local AGM

These are the fruiting bodies of old fungi,
cheesy coats ripening in the warming hall,
mine as bad; the surprising result of long
unseen strands of stealthy activity,
interpenetration behind neighbourly walls,
unexpectedly revealed in dull gauds;
who are all these people? Questions
ramble on, a steady ineffectual affront
blooming into the fidgety noise
like the smell; the elected man at the front
in a suit and fixed grin isn't going to help.
Decades of peace have come to this, crusties
on a last grumbling hurrah, whip-lash
salad-days, we'll have more next year.



June

Letting chance take the | helm, abdicate
wheel, overwhelm
choice, is difficult: did I choose that? Each
successive day is the same ache, ouch, thanks
scraped off yesterday by rote... And now
Love-in-the-mist is all starry mascara,
tight underwired delight, though brief,
brief: the year turns, curls like a leaf
in the pan, leaving only the little ants' busy
commitment to boiling empire, hooray,
they can have it. Ennui drains all; the river
slows to a warm green stop. The brass clock
of the sky, burnished, varnished, verbless –
rain – rain – the cisterns hollow with hope –
let sadness close like a daisy; sleep well.



Too hot overnight...

Too hot overnight and the washed-out morning
fades in like an unwanted entry in the calendar,
already flaccid intentions failing at the first
hurdle. Don't even get me started on the dreams,
leading pigs up the hill (they love the sky)
and a bargain-basement maze today. No news
anyway, and church later, with a half-step
at the lych-gate: the grey threat of drizzle
a C of E blessing with mumbled prayers
and only the faint chance of a good tune. Is it
the beginning or the end of the week?
Thanks offered or just a sincere hope
of doing better? The memorials on the walls
don't get a vote, way past their sell-by dates.



Cut out, excise, extirpate...

Cut out, excise, extirpate, raze: except,
leave the memory. We are naught, hollow
shells, seaside whispers from our last holiday,
without; the wind in the white daisies
on the green mounds means more, warm
in the sun and shaking their little heads
before worse weather. What next?
The wooden cross fades; even stone,
old friend, mumbles and is meaningless,
names illegible and the dates in a style
no longer used. Let alone Latin! – lingua
franca I don't think. So much thrown away.
Recycling is harder. We must try harder.
Is trying all we can do? Ah, failing, too.



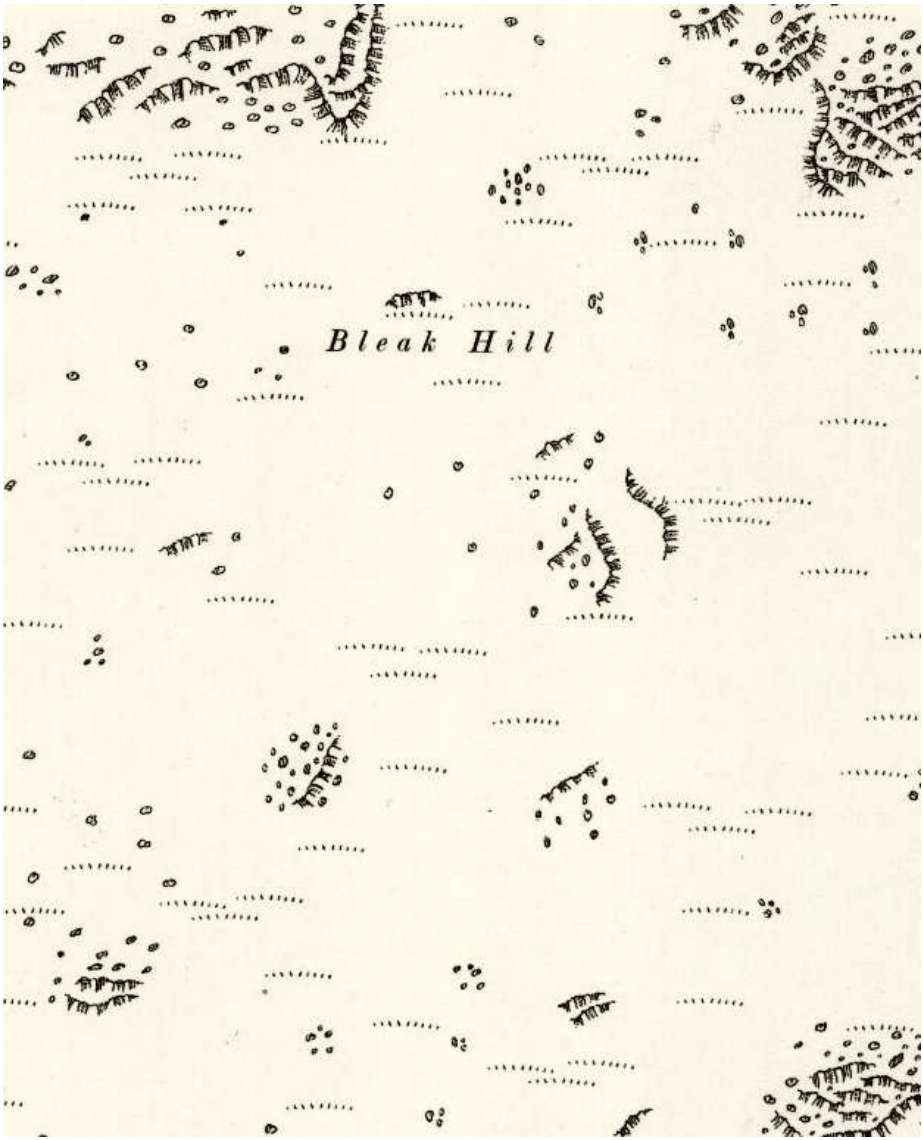
No more questions...

No more questions, because you might not
like the answers. Too many opinions
vexillating in the wind; and far, far too many
blanks on the map, either because cause
and consequence are too contentious,
or wind- and time-bleached, rubbed smooth
as Dartmoor granite, and soft as old sheets,
like my memories. Which leaves us with
very little, beyond, tentatively, 'I like you',
though the snail's horn is not more sensitive
to such a venture. Never mind, petal,
we can't all be crocodiles with a smug grin
for survival and a badge for out-door skills –
last night's supper sits heavy yet, digest that first.


HIST
CAP 10
APOC

Are you getting this...

Are you getting this, God? Is this line secure?
What about video? is there footage piling up?
Is confession a good idea now, blog it early,
it's my truth, yeah, maybe get my view across?
But what is this delay ("your case is important
to us, please hold"), I'm ready for sure –
what if the indictments are mislaid, boxed up,
mislabelled, manhandled, lost in some marbled
disused bathroom (brass fixtures tarnishing,
dust and a dead spider's closed-up legs telling
of old despair) – where do I stand then?
Memory is fallible, no more defence
than a sand-castle; and in the end will an angel's
bodycam, anyway, offer a different angle?


Bleak Hill

Mapping flushes...

Mapping flushes and arises is an exercise
of nodding and winking – pattacake pigsies,
a glimpsed will o' the wisp, Sunday-school
doodles in the blanks, marginal riddles
amongst unravelling field-notes. I am
awash in doubt, far from sure; too many layers,
unpickable one-way mixing, a bad-luck
penelope mirror-writing memos to myself,
buy milk, forgiveness, forgetfulness, fruit.
Too hot, the air has a nose to it, snooty,
the sink stinks. Clogged getaways, browned-
out hopes, hard days like green blackberries,
all down the pan – to be stymied by summer
is disappointing – believe me, winter is worse.



It is sad...

It is sad to be misunderstood, whatever I say.
On the other hand, the birds singing spring
over the garden wall are only doing that,
and meaning is over-rated, joy. Who said
it is the least interesting thing a poem can do,
to mean something? No-one, duh, half-sounds
in the whispering shell, shuffling off down
the decrepit corridors to X-ray. Perhaps I should try
an MRI instead, it's a soft-tissue issue, a doubtful
mezzotint, needing an expert to scry. But bones
are OK, right? Internal rhymes, something definite
to hang the rest on, however aching, awkward:
the gap in meaning a mere angstrom or two,
a blur, fine shades be damned – DNR, anyway.



Another full moon in March

February's purifications didn't work. Perhaps
I need a guide; a new start, anyway, a map,
fewer aches in the morning, wishes and horses,
go, go, go. The Great Joker might take a hand,
except the cards are racked, stacked, nicked
and numbered like the days of the month.
Could you make a nail if wanted? No chance,
even at need to plug a rotten hull, the sullen water
welling up like a bad dream: some simulation, this,
in the name of the father... The crazy hours teeter
and tilt, wow and flutter gone to hell and back –
so the moon is leering again, it's a monthly
inevitability, God's design – stand-up comedy
in stilettos at the end of the world – fuck off.



I have nearly counted...

I have nearly counted the leaves on my tree.
One question leads to another, yes,
but I don't think I'll start again; learning
is like next year's buds – coming out
where taught, maybe, but unfurling
anew. 'Luck with that, and what cheer? Well,
fibonacci probably had it pat all the time.
And then a long dream with you ending
irritated with me, inexplicably,
and I can't even ask about it, waking.
Which ache is the short straw? Anyone's
guess, throwaway numbers, and watching
is worse – where did I put that, that, thing?
Words like leaves too – compost legacy.

Notes

9 Christianbury Crags - *from* **The Gentleman's Magazine** 1754:

"AS you frequently entertain your readers with topographical curiosities, I send you a view and description of a natural rock in Cumberland, called Christen-bury Craiggs. *[1]

The rock is situated at the top of a mountain, very difficult of access, at which I had often looked through my telescope from a place three and twenty miles distant. The view at length so much excited my curiosity, that I determined to gratify it by a nearer examination; however, as it was early in the spring when I first formed this resolution, and as the ways are scarce passable, even in summer, I waited till the beginning of August, and then set out on my expedition.

I took a guide with me to Beu-Castle, a parish on the northward extremity of Cumberland, in which there is neither town nor village, but a few wretched huts only, which are widely scattered in a desolate country. After a journey of 20 miles, sometimes wading an hour together in water up to the horses girts, though the bottom was tolerably sound, we came to the church. At a small distance I discovered a hedge alehouse, which I knew must serve me for an inn, but when I entered it I was not more disgusted with the dirt and darkness of the room into which I was introduced, the floor of bare earth, and the bed less eligible than clean straw, than I was with the noisy mirth of some boors

*[1] Bury, in the Saxon language, signifies mansion, or mannor, and perhaps the converts to christianity in the north might assemble here to be undiscovered. - Hence the name Christen-bury.

who had been drinking till they were drunk. However, as I knew it was bootless to complain, I appeared, as well as I could, to be content, that I might not displease my host. The clergyman, indeed, was so obliging as to offer me his room at the parsonage, but as I was unwilling to give trouble, I declined it.

In the evening I acquainted mine host with the intent of my journey, and at my request he procured me another guide, who undertook to conduct me up the mountain to the craiggs. When I rose at four o'clock the next morning, I found him ready. The weather was extremely bright and serene, which greatly favoured my purpose, and after we had proceeded about two miles, we came to a place where there were a few more hovels, called the Flat.

After some talk with my guide, I discovered that he was very diffident of the success of our expedition, and of his own ability to procure me safe conduct; and therefore, as we were now in sight of the precipices, I hired a boy that kept sheep upon them to walk with us, at least as far as we could use our horses. By his direction we came into an hollow, through which the river Line runs, among innumerable precipices. In this hollow we were obliged often to cross the water to avoid the falls, and going sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, we made about a mile of winding way, and at length came into a kind of plain, one side of which was bounded by the declivity of the mountain, which we then began to ascend; soon after we had reached that part which was level with the base of the craigs, we found ourselves environed with a syrtes, which, as Milton says, was neither sea nor good dry land; here we were obliged to dismount, and having tied our horses by the bridles, we proceeded on foot: To tie them was, indeed, an unnecessary precaution, for the poor creatures, by a natural instinctive

sagacity, were as sensible of their danger as we, and stood motionless where we left them.

We now walked above a mile and a half over a tract of ground full of holes filled with boggy substance, which in this country is called a moss; we were here in perpetual terror lest it should give way under our feet, or lest some cloud, being stopped by the rocks, should bury us in a fog, and not only disappoint my curiosity, but prevent the recovery of our horses. However, we still went forward, and came to a place that was covered with moss of another kind. This lay above the ground in little heaps, about a foot over, called hassocks, which were full of holes, like an honey comb; the long irregular strides which we were obliged to take, to avoid these hassocks, made this part of my journey extreamly fatiguing. When we came within about a quarter of a mile of the base of the rock, we entered all on a sudden upon the finest grass plat that nature can produce; the ascent over this green is very gradual, and it has the appearance of a fine artifical slope.

The rocks, upon a near view, appear very rude and romantic; they are broken by innumerable fissures that go quite from top to bottom in a perpendicular direction; most of them are from 10 to 15 yards high; it is not difficult to walk on the top of them, nor in many places to step from one to another; some of them, however, project considerable over the side of the mountain, and upon these it would be dangerous to stand; they cover about three acres of ground, and bear some resemblance to Stone Henge, particularly in the difficulty of numbering them, which I attempted several times, but could never produce the same sum. To the caves among these rocks the moss troopers formerly retreated for security, and of late years one Micklehow, and a favourite mistress, took up their abode here for two or three seasons.

It has at present no inhabitants but wild cats, of which there are many, the largest I ever saw.

In our descent, notwithstanding the skill of the guides, we came a full mile west of our horses, which we at last found by the help of my compass; they stood trembling by one another, and had not stirred a step either in search of food or freedom; we led them down the brow, and thus ended the adventure of Christenbury Craig, which at a distance has all the appearance of one of those enchanted castles that are described in the heroic romances of the middle ages.

The mountain is on the skirts of Northumberland, and the rocks are upon its summit. In the calmest day there is a surprizing draught of bleak air into Northumberland wastes, which are the most shocking desarts that I ever saw in Britain.

If the rottenness of the soil on which these rocks stand be considered, perhaps it will not be thought an improbable conjecture that the whole summit of the mountain was once of the same height with the rocks, but that the wind and rains having by degrees washed and driven the softer parts down from the stone, they were formed into a bog below, and the rock left naked above.

The rocky part itself, however, appears to waste, the interstices being filled with a white sand, which is carried away in drifts, and great quantities of which is found in all the neighbouring places, whence it is carried to market, and sold for sharpening scythes and such other offices, for which it is much better than any other."

Mr URBAN

19 St Albans
Now called ‘Firwood House’, Sunningdale SL5 9RY.
‘Magnolia Cottage’ for a while in-between, too.

21 St Tredwell’s Loch
People used to come to it from other isles; before the chapel door was a heap of small stones, "into which the Superstituous People when they come, do cast a small stone or two for their offering, and some will cast in Money"; the loch is "held by the People as Medicinal";"a Gentleman in the Countrey, who was much distressed with sore Eyes, went to this Loch and Washing there became sound and whole...with both which persons he who was Minister of the place for many years was well acquainted and told us that he saw them both before and after the Cure: The present minister of Westra told me that such as are able to walk use to go so many times about the Loch, as they think will perfect the cure before they make any use of the water, and that without speaking to any... not long since, he went to this Loch and found six so making their circuit..." - John Brand, Brief Description of Orkney (1700)

47 *It is sad*… Who said…?
Well, actually, Steven Guy-Bray reported in a lecture entitled 'Aboutness in Shakespeare's poetry' that Mutlu Konuk Blasing said it in her *Lyric Poetry - the Pain and Pleasure of Words*. But I couldn't find it.

Pictures

2 Aerial view of Aphendrika, North Cyprus coast

4 OS 25" 1863 Cumberland VIII.6

6 Blacklands field, August 2015

8 OS 6" 1868 Cumberland IV

10 Grantchester meadows path, August 2019

12 High Onset, August 2014

14 OS 1:25,000 2024 (Overton Down)

16 Papa Westray NW shoreline, September 2016

18 PW, MLW, JTW, JWW, December 1960

20 OS 25" 1882 Orkney Sheet LXXI

22 OS 1:50,000 2024 (Withypool to Tarr Steps)

24 Thrang, July 2019

28 Worcester College, Oxford, November 2023

30 Luna skipping on way to school, October 2022

32 Fungi in Wytham Woods, January 2020

34 Love-in-the-mist, University Parks, Oxford, June 2023

36 Firle Church, East Sussex, January 2024

38 Grave outside St Mary the Less, Durham, July 2015

40 Snail on garden gate, October 2021

42 Angel making St John eat a book, Fitzwilliam Cambridge, February 2020

44 OS 25" 1898 Westmorland XXI.5

46 Corridor of Churchill Hospital, Oxford, December 2019

48 Cumbria, November 2019

50 University Parks, Oxford, October 2021

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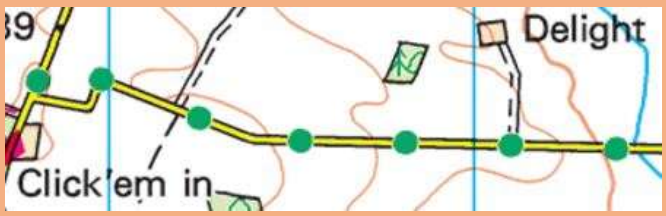

A Seldom-Seen
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